

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 15 September 2010
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Joan Buck (Alt.), Robert Dahn, Peter Drzewiecki (from 8:00p), Neil Facchinetti (Alt.), Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor. *Others present:* Grant Meitzler (Wetlands Agent).

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:30p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft **minutes of the 18 August meeting**, with the addition of "Joan Buck (Alt.)" to the list of absent members and correction of minor typos, were approved.
3. **Election of officers.** Kessel, Silander, and Lehmann (resp.), having indicated that they were willing to serve as Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary (resp.) for the coming year, were elected by acclamation. Kessel will also inform the Town Manager that Dahn and Drzewiecki are willing to continue as Commission members.
4. **IWA referral W1462 (Laurel La. bridge replacement)** The Town proposes to replace the 1-pier steel and timber Mt. Hope River bridge on Laurel Lane with a single-span steel bridge. The existing bridge (which currently serves one house) is not wide enough to qualify as a 1-lane bridge, and emergency vehicles must use extreme caution in crossing it. Its pier and abutments, which constrict the river's flow, would be removed. After some discussion, the Commission agreed on the following **motion** (Buck, Silander: all in favor save Drzewiecki, not yet present):

The Commission notes that the construction phase of this project could have a significant impact on wetlands and urges that care be taken to minimize it. A long-term benefit to the river system may be expected from replacing the existing substandard bridge with one less likely to fail and eliminating constrictions on flow.

{No one on the Commission expected to go on the IWA field trip to the site, which was scheduled for 9/16/10, the day after this meeting.}

5. **Agronomy farm.** Facchinetti spoke on Agronomy Farm issues at the 9/14/10 Town-Gown Committee meeting on behalf of the Storrs Heights Neighborhood Association. He asked the Committee to endorse a memorandum of understanding that irrigation and application of agricultural chemicals at the farm shall be done in a manner that does not diminish the supply or degrade the quality of well-water in the neighborhood. He also asked that an independent hydrologist be appointed to oversee the monitoring program and suggested that neighborhood wells be monitored directly for impacts on water quality and quantity (as opposed to indirectly via information obtained from monitoring wells at the farm).

6. **Open Space.** Buck attended the 8/17/10 meeting of the Open Space Preservation Committee and reported on discussion of Penner property issues and the up-coming referendum question on open-space funding.

7. Swan Lake outfall. Kessel will communicate item 6 of the July minutes to Barry Feldman at UConn, suggesting that the University save money by shelving this project, which is probably needed only for a diversion that is unlikely to be approved by DPH and DEP.

8. Ponde Place water. The developers of Ponde Place would like the University to agree to back up its water supply in the event of an emergency. It does not appear wise for the University to assume any additional water obligations, given the current drought advisory, which is likely to be perennial. Kessel will attend the Water & Wastewater Advisory Committee meeting tomorrow.

9. Adjourned at 8:30p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 20 October 2010

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 18 September 2010; revised 21 September 2010; approved 20 October 2010.